

Emmaus

& other poems

Jeremy James

1. Emmaus

Slow of heart,
they harkened to his words
as he related
patiently
his royal estate
and deity.

2. Simon

He was a long way
from Cyrene
the day he paced
those fateful steps
and bore a beam
that would comfort
evermore
those who wept.

3. Shimei

This squealing weasel
came on the scene
with bitter spite,
striking derisively
the man
whose caravan
scrambled through the night.

4. Joab

A warrior to the core,
whose only mode
of being
was war,
who knew no peace
in peacetime
and in his final scene
gleaned
only what he sowed.

5. Cornelius

He was one of us,
not a nation,
but chosen,
the first
of this great Respiration,
a man you could trust.

6. Rahab

Homeless harlot,
far-seeing
and set to flee,
for she knew what would be,
and why,
and tied the knot.

7. Esther

O elevated orphan
upon whose tender breasts
a nation rests,
through festive fare
daring to devise
a snare
and choke his lies.

8. Athens

A vain oasis
for all who thrive
on tattle and chatter,
where ancients dive
and scry for lies
and visitors listen
so matter-of-factly.

9. Antioch

How could a city
like this exist!
A tabernacle pitched
in the wilderness,
a fold unfolding
what God foretold.

10. Silas

Perhaps he knew
the soul called Paul
and what he might expect
when he accepted
his request,
but if not...
what a shock!

11. Centurion

Not one to wait
or hesitate.
He spoke
and it was done.
So he let his servants
confirm his faith.

12. Zeeb

O prince of Midian,
you overreached yourself
and took on Gideon,
a man who knew
his sword
came from the LORD
and gave to each
a just reward!

13. Miriam

She would have blushed
if she could
and shown her shame
but her snow-white skin
portrayed as much,
her chagrin
and her sin.

14. Ebed-Melech

No Ethiopian I know
is as noble
as the guy with the rope
who, hope against hope,
took a dive
for Jeremiah
and brought him out alive.

15. Achan

A nation alienated
by one man standing
on a wedge of gold,
doing what he was told
not to do
and invoking
a curse worse
than those of old.

16. Gehazi

After the incurable lure
of lucre
deluded the fool
and reeled him in,
he learned to live
in Syrian skin.

17. Ahitophel

How come this infallible fellow
fell so fast?
His oracular lips never slipped
nor did his gaze
ever fail to engage
the smallest detail.
And yet, when his splendor paled,
he hastened to the grave.

18. Lions' Den

Their diet included
human flesh
but this new arrival,
though healthy and fresh,
was a master, no less,
in the art of survival.

19. Baruch

The sparkling jewels
were not to be,
nor the place of greatness
he had imagined;
just patiently waiting
through grateful days
and staying away
from fools.

20. Stew

An innocent mistake,
I guess.
Perhaps he was assured
the gourd was good.
Who knows?
But they might have died
had not one cried,
Elisha, bless!

21. Hezekiah

For Joshua it stopped,
but here it retreats
ten degrees
and the whole world sees
the wonderful hand
of the God of Israel
making lines in the sand.

22. Zimri

What can we expect
from a wretch
but treachery,
here bathing in flame
in the royal residence,
erasing his presence
and seven day reign.

23. Gibeonites

We should have asked,
yes, we should have asked.
We thought we knew it all.
They looked so benign
and genuine,
but their guile and gall
wove a mask
that sorely took us to task.

24. Pomegranate

Your lush
and succulent juice
comes pouring forth
as we crush
your carmine flesh
and free its
winsome wine.

25. Phinehas

A priest with a spear
and a zeal
without equal.
Did Zimri know
his foe was near
or that he'd strike a peer
in this unholy show,
a man whose bed
is now a bier?

26. Meribah

Whether haste
or impatience
made him sway
I cannot say.
Not even his
amazing meekness
could allay
this weakness.

27. Angels

Stone rolling,
extolling
the Holy One
– *He is not here!* –
whom his own will see
in Galilee.

28. Rain

He peered minutely
and perceived
a distant cloud
out of the sea
whose tiny size belied
its potential
torrential
capacity.

29. Temple

Heretofore
a threshing floor,
and now a place of grace
ordained
by our Creator
for our Savior's glory.

30. Fig Tree

Physical Israel,
the one we see.
The other, a vine,
winding through time,
protected and chastened
by an eye sublime.

31. Jericho

A beggar in the desert,
she had forty years
to repent,
but was bent
on self-defense.
Her pride alone
was impregnable.

32. Capernaum

Why those mighty works
left you untouched
is a subject
much too painful
to discuss,
for in the answer lurks
an overarching darkness.

33. Zedekiah

His sons died before his eyes
(before his eyes were excised)
and his expectation was erased
as tears and blood
ran down his face.

34. Censer

Immutable perfume,
a divinely anointed reminder
of His immeasurable mercy,
an invisible rainbow
whispering *Shiloh!*
Thus Aaron stayed the plague.

35. Doeg

This Edomite
was pleased to smite
eighty-five
who wore the linen ephod
– *red and white* –
O glorious cloth of God!

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For further information visit www.zephaniah.eu

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